

# SEE MONTEREY



## **Explore the World within Monterey County**

*There's no need to cross the Pacific for worldly wanderlust with this California region's inspiring paths beckoning*

**Monterey, Calif., May 8, 2024** — California's [Monterey County](#), from coastal Carmel-by-the-Sea to the rich Salinas Valley, is a testament that there is no need to travel out of the country for sublime views, world-class adventures, rich culture and fine dining. Put the international bucket list aside to uncover parallel, if not preferable, travel experiences all within the state's Central Coast that boasts the best of California. Agriculture, art and natural beauty deliver rolling hills and ocean sunsets to anyone bold enough to venture beyond the obvious, and each corner of Monterey offers an authentic experience that is as harmonious as it is distinctive within the County.

## **Pass on Provence, Come to Carmel Valley**

Carmel Valley has all the characteristics of Provence with grapevines abounding — 45,000 acres to be precise. Housing more than 20 tasting rooms, Carmel Valley's wineries, such as [Georis Winery](#) and [Folktale Winery & Vineyard](#), mimic chateaus. Grosso lavender, a French-hybrid variety characterized by its signature purple bushiness, thrives in Carmel Valley's climate. [Carmel Valley Ranch](#) grows Grosso lavender across the expansive property, resulting in blooms reminiscent of fields in the south of France. [Bernardus Lodge & Spa](#) celebrates the season of lavender with an annual Harvest festival, where visitors are invited to explore more than 1,000 lavender plants with a glass of wine in hand. For a literal taste of Carmel Valley's two exports in one, "Carmel caramels," produced out of [Lion Springs Lavender Farm](#), blend notes of lavender and honey.

## **Looking for Lush? Indulge in Salinas Valley + South County over Ireland**

Salinas Valley has been dubbed the “salad bowl of the world” due to its production of half the country’s lettuce, a third of its spinach and nearly all of its artichokes, making for an array of greenery. A visit to [The Farm](#)— an agricultural education center offering farm tours and ample produce for sale — allows visitors to taste the freshest and most vibrant shades of green. [Pinnacles National Park](#) is a major draw of the region — a hike through its signature caves, often covered in green moss, will make for an epic adventure. For a post-hike refresher, head to [The Cork & Plough in King City](#) for a house-made soda and one of their daily specials – maybe even a little Irish whiskey from the bar.

### **Miss Morocco, Make it to Marina**

Skip the Sahara and check out Californian sand dunes that overlook the sea. [Marina Dunes Preserve](#)’s main attraction is its towering dunes — the highest on the central coast. For those daring enough, hang-gliding from the top of the dunes is a thrilling activity option. Adjacent to the preserve is [Marina State Beach](#), a popular spot for taking in the sweeping views of the Pacific Ocean, particularly for a spectacular sunset. Directly between the two parks lies [Salt Wood Kitchen and Oysterette](#), where diners have the choice between three distinct dining environments — a full-service dining room, lively bar and lounge or al fresco patio.

### **Find a European Fairytale in Carmel-by-the-Sea**

[Carmel-by-the-Sea](#) is famously out of a storybook, dotted with whimsical architectural, historic family-owned bed and breakfasts and artistic spectacles aplenty. Carmel has everything one could need within its town limits — there are more restaurants per capita than any other small town in America and about 100 art galleries in just one square mile. The art scene celebrates both the heritage and the future of the community with [Zantman Art Galleries](#) fitting within the theme of “having it all” as one of the longest running fine art galleries in the U.S. featuring contemporary paintings to traditional masterpieces from artists all over the world. Carmel-by-the-Sea’s culinary offerings are equally enchanting, with a highlight being [Portabella’s](#) French and Italian fare featuring fresh locally sourced seafood articulated by a serene al fresco dining setting. [Vagabond’s House Inn](#) is an excellent lodging option close to artistic cottages designed by the legendary architect, Hugh Comstock.

### **Pacific Grove over the Painted Ladies**

While San Francisco’s Painted Ladies and world-famous strip of Victorian-era homes have international allure, Pacific Grove offers distinctive architectural charm of nearly identical dwellings without the crowds. [Dr. Hart’s Mansion](#) is one of California’s beloved historical treasures, a Victorian mansion built in 1893 with preserved original grandeur that has stood the test of time. While this one is not open for overnight stays, look no further than [Seven Gables Inn](#) or [Green Gables Inn](#) for a relaxing B&B experience with top-notch views and nods to history around every corner.

### **Old Fisherman’s Wharf for Fishermen’s Fare**

Skip one of San Francisco’s busiest tourist areas and head south to Old Fisherman’s Wharf, a picturesque pier over the Monterey Bay with wildlife encounters and some of the Peninsula’s top seafood dining. To get your hands on fishermen’s finest, visit historic staples like [Old Fisherman’s Grotto](#), or opt for more laidback settings at [Abalonetti](#). Beyond the obvious seafood samplings, the area’s many candy shops offer everything from saltwater taffy to rich chocolates. While in Monterey, tap into the European hostel-hopping trend and book a stay at the newly reopened [Monterey Hostel](#).

### **Skip St. Andrews in Scotland, Try Pebble Beach**

Widely considered America's greatest public golf course, [Pebble Beach Golf Links](#) is a golfer's paradise, and no venturing across the pond is necessary. Play the round of a lifetime, just like the pros, on a lush course that has been home to six U.S. Open championships. Off the course the area can be explored by foot and by car via 27 miles of hiking trails in the [Del Monte Forest](#), as well as the famous [17-Mile Drive](#), a visually stunning stretch of roadway which hugs the Pacific coastline from Pacific Grove to Pebble Beach. For a real taste of Scotland, snag a table at [STICKS](#) at The Inn at Spanish Bay to be serenaded by the nightly bagpiper performance at sunset.

### **Safari at Sea**

Skip a savanna safari and head to [Moss Landing](#) and [Elkhorn Slough](#) for wildlife viewing in wetlands and estuaries. A cradle of biodiversity in Monterey, Elkhorn Slough has a fascinating history: it was slated to become an oil refinery in 1960, but the community banded together to preserve it as the sanctuary known today, housing a diverse population of birds, plants, marine mammals and fish. Visitors can kayak through and appreciate the natural beauty that surrounds them. Moss Landing is a popular docking spot for whale watching boats; booking time with eco-friendly [Sanctuary Cruises](#) will allow opportunity to find the best views of humpback whales, sea otters and even orcas, as tours are capped around 25 people.

### **Salinas for the Savory – From Pints to Plates**

Salinas, widely known as the hometown of famous literary great John Steinbeck, could very well be considered the region's hub for craft beer and authentic Mexican cuisine, even rivaling San Diego's food culture. With a meteoric rise in brew offerings on the city's Main Street, from the female-owned [Brew-N-Krew Ale House](#) to [Farmers Union Pour House](#) and local favorite [Alvarado Street Brewing Company](#), beer lovers will find Salinas' downtown both welcoming and walkable. For more flavor-driven exploration, the [Salinas Farmers Market](#) on Saturdays year-round captures the best of the city's authentic Mexican cuisine through its variety of food trucks, as well as produce from mere miles away in the Salinas Valley. As for brick-and-mortar Salinas institutions, [El Charrito](#) is a local favorite known for traditional cuisine and homemade tortillas, and family-owned [Villa Azteca](#) has inventive fare, like lobster enchiladas, capturing the intersection of heritage and fresh seafood. If further recommendation is needed, take it from the stars and head to [Justin and Hailey Bieber-vetted](#) Los Grullenses for next-level tacos.

### **Oaxaca on the Water**

The city of [Seaside](#) is home to one of the largest Oaxacan populations outside of Mexico. Find [authentic Oaxacan restaurants](#) like La Tortuga or sip mezcal at one of the local watering holes. Come September, Seaside hosts the annual "Oaxaca by the Sea" event with live entertainment, authentic Oaxacan cuisine, and more. Seaside is also home to local watering hole [Other Brother Beer Co.](#), and [The Meastery](#), a locally owned modern, sustainably minded meat market with small-batch charcuterie, deli items and gourmet retail.

### **Big Sur — No Duped Destination**

Big Sur is one of America's most sought-after vacation destinations — so much so that comparisons don't feel appropriate. In addition to the area's rock formations that mirror Cabo or Capri's signature seabound sights, there are multiple easy-access state parks that are teeming with wildlife and spectacular surroundings, including [Julia Pfeiffer Burns State Park](#) and [Pfeiffer Big Sur State Park](#). Beyond the parks' sweeping seaside views, 300-foot redwoods and hiking trails await where forestland meets the beachfront. Following recent closures on Highway 1, access to the northern Big Sur area, and all hotels, restaurants and parks, is anticipated to be fully available to visitors as of Memorial Day — just in time for summer season.

For more information on Monterey County and to inspire your next trip, visit [www.SeeMonterey.com](http://www.SeeMonterey.com).

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#### **ABOUT SEE MONTEREY**

See Monterey is a 501c6 non-profit organization that drives tourism for Monterey County. Tourism is the largest industry on the Monterey Peninsula and the second largest in the County. See Monterey is a partnership of the hospitality community and local governments that aims to generate community prosperity and enrich economic vitality for Monterey County through the responsible promotion and growth of the tourism economy. Travel spending in Monterey County was nearly \$3 billion in 2022, supporting 25,370 jobs and generating \$307 million in state and local tax revenue that directly benefited the community. For more information, visit [www.SeeMonterey.com](http://www.SeeMonterey.com) and follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [X](#) (Twitter).

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